



More Metal for your
Muffin

the CENTURION OUTPOST
Cornerstone Issue
July/August

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Mission Statement

The Centurion Outpost is a Christian Music magazine that focuses mostly on bands that like to use their music as a ministry to win souls to God. We basically want bands that have a ministry to get some exposure. We cover bands from genres such as Metal, Death Metal, Power Metal, Black Metal, Thrash Metal, Speed Metal, Grindcore, Metalcore, Hardcore, Punk, Street Punk, Hardcore Punk, and even some occasional Hard Rock. As you can see we really like our metal, so you can expect coverage of mostly metal bands. This does not make us an official metal magazine but we will cover ALOT of metal bands so if you like metal, you've come to the right place. Luckily it's completely FREE. We will try and email everything once a month, so we hope and pray we can get twelve issues out by the end of next year. If you have a friend who wants to subscribe please have them visit www.freewebs.com/centurionoutpost or simply email Dan at criesfrommypast@hotmail.com . You can contact Dan on AIM at Criesfrommypast and MSN at Criesfrommypast@hotmail.com . Thanks for subscribing to Centurion Outpost.

-Dan and Mike

Want your band's CD in the Magazine?

If you want your band to be covered in Centurion Outpost, you can send us your demo or album at 5858 Barberry Drive, Imperial MO, 63052. If you do send us a CD or demo, please include the full lyrics to the songs. We will not review anything that we haven't read the lyrics to. If your lyrics are printed on your bands website then feel free to just email us the link. If you want to be interviewed in the magazine then feel free to email Dan at criesfrommypast@hotmail.com thanks, God Bless.

Staff Bios

Dan Terry: Editor in Chief

I'm a 19-year-old college student currently enrolled at ITT Tech. I love metal, especially underground metal. I started this magazine in January of 2005 and have been working like a dog trying to get it off the ground. I do most of the Album Reviews, Interviews, Articles, and occasionally some artwork.

Michael Yahne: Art Designer

I'm a 19-year-old college student currently enrolled at Jefferson College. I do most of the artwork for Centurion Outpost. I love metal, hardcore, folk, street punk, dark ambience, and rock.

Joe Wren: Audio Tech and General Advice Giver

I'm a 20-year-old college student currently enrolled at Jefferson College. I do most of the audio editing for the Centurion Outpost Radio show and I also co host the show. I love music in general, anything that is sincere and good I will give a listen to.

Contact

Feel Free to Contact us about anything, we would love to talk to you! We want as many opinions as possible, and if we get enough we can start printing them in the magazine. We will try and read each and every email and reply to them as fast as possible.

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If you want to write us a letter instead of email us then you can write us at Centurion Outpost 5858 Barberry Drive Imperial MO, 63052

Christian Metal News

Mortification has announced their new drummer to be Damien Percy. Steve Rowe will be discussion with Damien the Possibility of a permanent stay with Mortification. The title of their upcoming album Impaling the Goblin has been changed to Erasing the Goblin since Impaling is considered a rather offensive term in some parts of Europe. Steve will also be re releasing the Grind Planets, Live Planetarium, and Envideon videos on DVD within the next 18 months.

Crimson Thorn is currently writing material for a follow up album to Purification. Also they have re released their Unearthed and Dissection albums as a double disc release called Unearthed for Dissection. Both albums are digitally re mastered. They also have a new DVD available at their website www.crimsonthorn.com

Zombie Devourment has an MP3 up at www.myspace.com/zombiedevourment . They are currently recording their debut album American IDOLatry.

Eden in Ruins is currently writing material for a new full length album. No title has yet been released

Transfigural Form has released a new EP called Blood that can be downloaded in its entirety at www.soundclick.com/transfiguralform .

Consecrator is currently working a new album to follow up Image of Deception; it will be the bands first recording in almost ten years.

Centurion Outpost now has a radio show that you can download every week at <http://dansoutpost.proboards46.com> you can find the show in the Radio section, every week we have an hour long show where we play music and talk about current issues.

Be sure to sign up for the Centurion Outpost message board at <http://dansoutpost.proboards46.com> the board has been thriving in the past two months and it's a great community to be part of so be sure to check it out.

Band Spotlight: TRANSFIGURAL FORM



This is Todd Popes old band who has come back again and given us a brand new EP called Blood that can be downloaded for free at www.soundclick.com/transfguralform This is thrash/death metal at its best with crunchy guitars, speedy solos, and a huge dose of death vocals. Definitely worth checking out, be sure to read my review of the Blood EP on page 21, and be sure to visit the TF website at www.freewebs.com/transfiguralform .

An email interview with Brazilian Death Metal band Sabbatarium, enjoy.

Dan-Who are you and what do you do in the band?

Sabbatarium-I'm Isaque 23, formed in Computer Science, I work as a system analyst, and I'm the bass player of the band.

Dan- What is the meaning behind the name Sabbatarium?

Sabbatarium-Sabbatarium means the person who keeps the Sabbath (holy day). In our case the person who keeps a day for week to dedicate to God.

Dan-Can you give us a small history of the band?

Sabbatarium-Sabbatarium is a death metal band formed in 2001 by childhood friends Fabio (drums), Daniel (vocals), and Marcos (guitars). This band was created as a death metal band, but their beginning only began as a joke and was not something the group wanted to take seriously. During 2002, Isaque (b), former Apeiron band member joined the band, then they decided to record their first album. So they recorded an album called "Sword of God" which was only released only on the Internet. A lot of people downloaded the songs from the bands web page. By December 2002, Taanak from the band Demoniciduth from Switzerland invited the band to make a split CD. So the band has released the split CD! The bands current line up has been made complete with the new guitarist Philip former Mercy leader, who has joined the band recently. Now the band is working very hard on the songs of the new album in which the band will play a more progressive death style.

You can check out some reviews at pages

rock-impressions.com Italian

www.wm4c.net French

thewhippingpost.tripod.com English

www.whiplash.net Portuguese

<http://www.musicextreme.com> English

Dan- What kind of bands are you influenced by?

Sabbatarium-Well each band member likes different bands. I'm influenced by many bands like Extol, As I Lay Dying, Living Sacrifice, Tourniquet, Mortification, and many others.

Dan- Where did you record In the Valley of the Shadow? What equipment did you use?

Sabbatarium-We've recorded our CD in our home studio.

The equipment we used is

PC Athon 2.4

Audygb 2

Jackson Guitar

Ibanez 7 string

Bass Condor 5 strings

Tama Drums

Etc...

Dan-How did you come to do a split CD with Demoniciduth?

Sabbatarium-I've receive an e-mail from Taanak inviting us to make a split cd with them, so we made the split.

Dan-What is the mission or goal of Sabbatarium?

Sabbatarium-Our mission is to send a good message through this dark world

Dan-How is the Christian metal scene in Brazil?

Sabbatarium-I believe that in Brazil we have the largest Christian metal scene in the world, although, the bands don't have many resources to make a good cd. But they do very well in their effort to give a great concerts and events. Maybe this is due to the results of the present social condition Brazil being a 3rd World Country. In our city, we have a lot of respect. We have many people in our city who like Christian metal.

Dan-Has the band received any persecution for its faith?

Sabbatarium-NO.

Dan-What bands have you been listening to lately?

Sabbatarium-Chevelle, ill Niño, System Of A Down, POD, Soul Embraced, As I lay Dying,

Underoath, ZAO, Dream Theater, Agony Scene, Trivium, etc...

Dan-What do you think about the Christian metal scene in America?

Sabbatarium-I love American Christian metal scene. There are a lot of band of every styles. I can mention many bands that have respect on secular scene. Bands like Pod, Tourniquet, As I lay dying and many others. Actually we must take care of band member's testimony. God is raising a lot of Christian bands to praise the name of God thru that land. Now we can see Christian bands in every Continent and Musical styles. Read Psalm 150:6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD

Dan-Your song Gift of Compassion was more melodic than the songs on In the Valley of the Shadow. Does the band plan on going in this more technical and melodic direction in the future?

Sabbatarium-Of course, we've changing our musical direction; our new songs look like this song. We've practicing more technical and melodic songs.

Dan-Does the band plan on recording any new material soon?

Sabbatarium-Now, we're working too hard at our new album. Maybe named "the offspring's legacy". It will tell about a history of a Man who had a troubled life then he has accepted God in his life. Any other plans are in Gods Hands

Dan- Any Closing Statements?

Sabbatarium-God bless you all. Support our band by buying our cd, T-shirts etc... Especially you Daniel to give us opportunity! God bless you and your family man.

Grim-Scepter of Blood
Label-Laceration Productions
Released-1999
Style-Black Metal

Very rarely will we come across an extreme metal album that will deeply move our hearts. An album that will bring you warmth, joy, and despair all in one package, an album that will make you search the inner depths of your soul. The album in question would be one in a million, something that would be destined to go unnoticed, something that the general masses could not begin to understand or handle. That album is Grim's Scepter of Blood. A one man project by Thomas Eversole Grim released a demo tape and this album and was never heard from again. To a lot of us this is a crime that should not go unnoticed, but we must also realize that we were blessed with a wonderful album.

Ok, let's go to the musical aspects of it all. The first thing you need to know about Grim is that the production is HORRIBLE so horrible you cannot actually enjoy this album at a normal volume, you will need to crank it up to the full capacity on whatever CD player you are using, if you don't, you will not even remotely hear the music being played. Musically Grim plays some harsh black metal. The guitars are played very fast and harsh, yet despite the aggression there is a lot of melody to them. The drums aren't ultra great but they are not really all that present except on a few songs. As a matter of fact only four of the songs are actually true metal songs at all. The rest are instrumental and melodic pieces. The opening song Remorse is a haunting keyboard instrumental. What a Terrible Night to Have a Curse is next and is very fast, harsh and blasting. After that comes the title track Scepter of Blood which is a very depressing keyboard driven slow song, the song features death growls and black shrieking but a lot of spoken word, and some guitar towards the end. Exaltation is another fast black metal song with death vocals, but towards the end takes on new life and becomes a very melodic melodic piece of music. Writhe is my favorite song on the disc, it is an acoustic instrumental that brings warmth to my heart and almost brings me to tears. Chastisement of the Putrid is a fast and grinding black metal song with some melodic elements. From Within takes up where Writhe left off with some more hopeful acoustic beauty, no lyrics on this one either. The song Necrosis is next and is the last speedy black metal tune on the disc, it is probably the fastest and most harsh on the album. The song Nocturne ends the CD off with a beautiful piano instrumental. The CD is just an experience in melody and aggression.

Lyrically Grim is so emotional and upfront about Christ. Some songs deal with the consequences of disobeying Christ. Yet other songs simply beg for God to come back and to end all pain. If you can find a copy of this album anywhere it is worth your time and money. I would also be you to overlook the production and find the album within.

Reviewed by Dan.

Goredeath-Cast Into Darkness

Released-2000

Label-Laceration Productions

Style-Death/Grind

Goredeath is one of those bands who most despise, yet have quite a few die hard fans. I may be a biased since I am a die hard Goredeath fan. This CD is simply fantastic, one of the few releases on the late Laceration production, the same label who put out the Screams of Abandon Compilation and the highly esteemed Grim Scepter of Blood album. Now the question is does Goredeath stack up to Grim? Well not in the sense of musical creativity, especially since Goredeath is more of the death/grind persuasion. This CD can only truly be described as fun, with the appeal of a 1980's slasher film.

Goredeath plays death/grind in a very harsh, underproduced environment. In my opinion the production is what makes this CD sound so harsh and raw, the only complaint is that the music could afford to simply be turned up a bit. Anyways, what we have here is a grinding assault on your ears. The guitars are fast, really fast, and have one goal, grind you into oblivion. Grinding seems to be the only goal here, since the riffs being played are extremely simplistic and sometimes very sloppy. The drumming is also kind of sloppy, but will hit you with tons of double bass and lots of blasting. The vocals have some occasional death growls, but for the most part are just high pitched and raspy. Despite all the blasting and grinding going on, there is also some creepy male and female vocals buried in the background of the songs, making them all the more creepy to listen to. There is a wonderful ambient instrumental on the album by the name of Chant the Lullaby of Death as the Fetus is Disposed, which features some light guitar playing and some beautiful female vocals. There are a few sound clips on the CD from movie such as Children of the Corn and Stigmata, which adds to the creepiness of the CD. Overall, while not being all that complex or original, Goredeath does their job in creating, raw, fast, grinding and gross music.

Lyrically Goredeath shines for Christ, which you would not expect from a band with this name. Songs deal with various topics, from abortion, sin, the defeat of Satan. There is one song called Deception of the Raven which is about a girl cheating on him, where although I liked the song musically, I thought the lyrics were very much out of place for this type of music, and since all the other lyrics dealt with more epic topics. Just like the music, don't expect any deep symbolism in these songs, because you won't find much. With song titles like Souls Hacked to Shreds, Gorified, Drowned in Vomit (Vomitorium) it is apparent that they were trying to appeal to fans of secular death/grind in order to present the gospel to them, which I really respect. There is even a chainsaw sound effect in the song Souls Hacked to shreds. Overall I think Goredeath is a great CD to buy if you can find it, and that no grind fan should be without one.

Reviewed by Dan

Noiz-Seeds of the Living

Label-None

Released-1999

Death Metal

So one day I was browsing the internet looking for Christian metal bands that I have not heard before, and I came across site www.noiz.de where I discovered that this German death metal band had already broken up. My heart very much despaired at this. I have the band luck of getting into a band right after they have broken up. My heart jumped for joy when I visited the media section of the site and discovered I could download their entire album Seeds of the Living absolutely for free. So if you read this review and are interested, you can have this CD totally free if you are willing to download it. The CD is a good 44 minutes in length.

Musically Noiz plays old school death metal and has very clear production for an independent band. The guitars are fast and grindy and have quite a nice crunch to them occasionally they will even bust out a guitar solos. The pace shifts quite frequently from fast and grinding to more midpaced riffing and then back into some blasting. While not being all that complex the riffs can be very catchy, I found myself headbanging to a few parts on the CD. There are also a few nice melodic melodies and keyboards thrown in there, but these are occasional. The drumming is very good with a lot of blast beats, but the drummer is quite good because he shifts pace with the song instead of just maintaining one constant double bass beat throughout the song. I would actually say that the drumming is one of the high points of the CD as far as being varied and interesting. The vocals are done in a usual deep guttural growl, yet occasionally some hardcore yelling is used. The vocals are also very in time with the music which is not too common in death metal, when the music speeds up the vocals speed up right along with it which gives us some very fast death and grindcore moments. It's also worth knowing that the death vocals are very easy to understand just by listening. I just love the fast pace of this CD and the energy being displayed by the band, once again it is such a shame to see that such a great band has broken up.

Lyrically Noiz is very Christ centered. Also the songs have a recognizable verse-chorus-verse song structure. This would make a new death metal fan feel a bit more comfortable with it. The lyrics deal with topics such as sin, humanism, worthlessness, and serving God with all of our hearts. Overall this is just a great CD that never got the recognition it deserved, it's heavy, catchy, melodic and sincere. The songs will seriously be stuck in your head for days. If you're a fan of death metal or you just want to read some uplifting lyrics you can go to their website at www.noiz.de and download this CD or read the lyrics.

Reviewed by Dan.

Vardoger-Whitefrozen
Label-Endtime Productions
Released-2004
Style-Black Metal

So imagine you're at Cornerstone and you're browsing through hundreds upon hundreds of awesome Christian metal CDs. Now imagine you still have money left in your pockets after this brief trip to heaven. Then you see a blue digipack there on the table, on the cover of the CD in question is a snow white forest, you have no idea what the band is called or who they are or if they have a discography to speak of. So you quickly shell out fifteen dollars and take the CD back to your tent and immediately pop it into your CD player and closer your eyes.

The first song you are presented with is Desert Pale which starts off with some quick keyboard sounds and then suddenly becomes a very atmospheric and melodic black metal song, equipped with lush keyboards that create surreal soundscapes, very melodic guitar with a depressive quality to them that makes you feel a slight bit cold, some mid paced drumming that keeps you nice and relaxed. The vocals are harsh but they create a nice contrast to the beautiful place that you've just been swept away to. Yet after three minutes and forty four seconds the song ends, but you're alright because the next song Footprints of Thunder has picked up right where Desert Pale left off. This song is a bit faster but still very relaxing and has a nice folky melody to it, the harsh vocals and keyboards come more into force as the song gets started and suddenly your back where you were in the last song, relaxed and dreaming about a frozen paradise. Then to your surprise you hear some beautiful melodic singing going on in the background. There is no flaw in the singing at all, it sounds like a true fantasy choir. Your heart leaps with joy knowing that you've made a great purchase. Then after only three minutes and eleven seconds the song is over. The next song Inferno speeds things up again but keeps you relaxed enough, the harsh vocals are back in full force on this one but then suddenly a wonderful keyboard solo in the middle grabs your heart and brings a smile back to your face. You think to yourself for the tenth time "where has this CD been all my life?" As soon as you do that then you are presented with an awesome guitar solo to top things off which makes you sure that you actually asleep and have dreamed the whole thing. The Song Whitefrozen starts off very atmospheric with some bells jingling in the background and a keyboard intro after about a minute the metal comes back in and you continue your journey. This song signals the return of the flawless singing only this time there are some great creepy chants going on in the background. After you've listen to that song six or seven times in a row you continue to the song Silent Witness which features the harsh black metal vocals again and a lovely piano intro that never goes away but only continues on through the masterpiece of a song. You poise yourself in anticipation for the next great masterpiece to come on, but your smile becomes a despairing frown as you hear nothing. That's it, no more music for you to enjoy. For what you have spent your fifteen dollars on was a five song EP. You could swear that

you've heard that song Footprints of Thunder somewhere before. Then it dawns on you. That song was on the Come Armageddon sampler CD put out by Endtime Productions. This band is Vardoger, the Norwegian black metal band. Frantically you go back to the Endtime tent to ask where you can get your hands on the Vardoger full length. Yet instead of hand it to you with a smile they simply frown in concern and explain that nobody has heard anything from Vardoger since this EP. Nobody knows the status of this band, and nobody knows who the band members are. So you go back to your tent with your head hung low. You clock the time on the EP and realize that the live changing experience you just had in your tent was in fact only a nineteen minute one.

You return home after listening to the EP thirty seven times on the drive back. Then a few days later you are on the computer and run a Google search on Vardoger to discover that they do in fact have a website. With great anticipation you click on the link only to discover that the website is only one page with a picture of the EP you have on it and a link to the Endtimes Productions website. In anger and despair you pop in the CD to calm yourself down and you simply deal with it. At this point you realize that you should simply be thankful that you have this wonderful piece of art in your possession.

Then you pop in the CD and pull out the lyrics and start reading them and find them to be very good as well. All the songs are very centered are hope in Christ and are not cheesy in the slightest bit. They are very creative in their metaphors and word usage but are not in the least bit afraid to mention the name of Christ in their lyrics.

So now I think you catch the drift of all of this. This is more or less the same dilemma that Mike and I had when we first discovered Vardoger at Cornerstone a year ago. Search as we might we never did find any more info on Vardoger, if anybody has any info on the location or plans of this band please bring it to our attention as soon as possible. We have been searching for quite awhile now and would hope to share this good news with anyone. This CD can be found at the Endtime Productions website at www.endtimeproductions.com

I would encourage anybody who is into folkish and atmospheric black metal to check this band out. Do not let the price of the disc scare you away it is worth every penny that you spend on it.

Reviewed by Dan.

Grave Forsaken-Grave Forsaken

Released-2005

Label-None

Style-Thrash/Heavy Metal

You guys all know Grave Forsaken, those guys who just showed up on the Centurion Outpost message boards one day. A few weeks ago I received their demo in my mailbox. I got home from work and my mother said something about me having a package from Australia, so I quickly ran in and looked at it. The first thing I noticed about the CD was the cool artwork which features a slightly ajar door of a tomb. I suppose this represents the open tomb of Christ, since the band is called Grave Forsaken and all. The packaging was simple but very cool. The artwork and lyrics on the back were simply laminated paper which made up the case. I remember thinking this was an awesome idea.

Now on to the music, we'll take it song by song. The first song is a fast paced thrash song called The Calling. Right away the song hits you with some fast riffing and then Vaughan's vocals kick in, his voice is very gruff and had kind of a tough guy thrash sound to it. The drumming is fairly mid paced there really isn't a whole lot going on with it. Overall the song flows well and talks about answering God's call and to be willing to do the work required to further God's kingdom. The second song The North wind starts off with some chugging but then goes into a very classic metal like riff. When the vocals kick in they sound nearly identical to Steve Rowe's of Mortification, as a matter of fact people would mistake this for Mortification if they didn't know better. Overall the song has a big classic metal feel to it, there are tons of hooks and power riffage going on here. My only complaint here is the drums again, it just doesn't seem like there's a whole lot going on with them. This may just have something to do with the low production quality. There is an awesome guitar lead in the background towards the end of the song. The lyrics talk about bringing your heart back to its original state of worship through Christ. Next comes Celebrity Judge and the Sinners part I this song is kind of a slower doomish kind of song, with some slow riffing. The vocals on this song sound more like the vocals on the first song The Calling. The drumming is prominent on this song. Lyrics are an interesting story about Gods judgment of sinners, Ill guess we'll have to wait for part 2. Now comes the final track which is my favorite Death on the Cross. This song is a heavy metal feast, a slower paced song at first that picks up more and more speed as it goes then finally it goes into the shout along chorus "Death Death Death on the Cross" overall this song rocks hardest of all the songs on the demo.

I would say that for a debut demo CD this one sounds pretty good and I cannot wait to hear more from this band. You can talk to the band on their message board at <http://dansoutpost.proboards46.com> or you can download this demo for free at www.graveforsaken.com.

Reviewed by Dan.

Encryptor-Cryptic Works
Label-Bombworks Records
Released-2005
Style-Death/Grind

Ahh what more can I say about Encryptor? This may be yet another biased review since Phil Diez was just as big a help getting this magazine started as Mike and myself. Anyways, Encryptor only released two albums Drowning in Flesh and Sermon Decay; you can read the rest of the Encryptor story in depth at his website www.encryptoronline.com.

Production wise there is no difference, sometimes this is good, sometimes this is bad. Encryptor plays brutal death metal with a few melodic moments. Musically Drowning In Flesh is heavy, fast, brutal, but features some melodic parts. Guitars are downtuned but they can easily get buried in the drums. The drumming is fast, not really technical but not bad, in some places though it sounds very forced instead of being natural. The vocals are extremely deep death growls and are very hard to understand without a lyric sheet and it's hard even then to understand them! Overall Drowning in Flesh is a good album hurt by bad production, since it is not an overly fast or brutal album like Sermon Decay, the brutal production really just drowns out the musical quality of the songs. Just as a warning though the song Prophecy of Infinity has a part on it where it sounds like the disc is skipping, I just wanted to let everyone know that this is completely intentional.

Sermon Decay is faster, more brutal, and did I mention fast and brutal? Sermon Decay seems to be the clear vision of Encryptor. The album seems to have improved the production slightly, but this time the raw production helps it instead of hinders it. The guitars are deeper and clearer sounding than Drowning In Flesh; the drumming is louder faster and generally more obnoxious than on the last release, although it is more precise this time around. The vocals are even louder and in some places are so deep they sound like a heavy stone is being dragged against pavement. There is a nice cover of Cast Into Darkness by Goredeath as the album opener. Truthfully I enjoyed the Encryptor version much more than the Goredeath one. Phil also utilizes his high pitched shrieking vocals that you know well from Sorrowstorm releases. I really enjoy the way he layered the high and low vocals together in places to give them a more extreme and terrifying quality. Overall what you will hear mostly is a frightening mix of drums versus vocals, I am pretty sure this is all intentional of course.

Lyrically Encryptor has been and always will be about exposing false truths, battling evil, and showing us that there is hope amidst despair. He is not afraid to admit when he is depressed and when he feels down, but he illustrates in his lyrics how to find hope and how to find salvation through Christ. All lyrics can be found and printed out at www.encryptoronline.com. BTW everyone be sure to email him constantly and bug him to release more music.
Reviewed by Dan.

Eden in Ruins-The Unknown

Released-2005

Label-None

Style-Gothic/Heavy Metal

Well kids after two years or so Todd Pope is back with a different band and a new vision. Most of you may know Todd from his previous musical escapade Transfigural Form. Yet since that band went the way of the darkness in 2003 Todd had some personal issues to work out and in 2005 he decided to start this new project under the name Eden in Ruins. Eden in Ruins is actually Todd's old band name from before Transfigural Form, but I assure you this Eden in Ruins is very much different than the original Eden in Ruins.

This four song EP is the first release of the "new Eden in Ruins". It starts off with the song The Unknown Known which is a slow paced song, this stuff definitely has a very laid back sound compared to Todd's other project. The guitar playing has a very strong classic metal vibe. The riffs are melodic and creepy. The first thing you'll notice on this disc is the fact that Todd is no longer doing any death vocals but is singing. His voice is still able to remain creepy though, he sings very deeply yet sounds very laid back, no matter how frightening the subject matter is in the lyrics he is just saying it very calmly which I think adds to the creepiness. The second song On the Other Side starts off with a nice melodic riff and then goes into an up beat hard rock riff that takes us into some nice metal riffs and then Todd starts singing again which sounds really well with the melodic leanings of the song. The chorus of this song is very catchy as well; there is also a rockin solo at the end of the song. The third song Unlight is a creepy instrumental with a huge compliment of keyboards. It almost sounds like it could go very well with a Castlevania game. The haunting chimes and deep bass sound awesome, and Todd even decides to add some deep creepy speaking. Don't listen to this song before bedtime kids. Then the song The Grave kicks in which also has a very strong metal/hard rock sound to it. This song is very similar to the song On the Other side; I think the songs are connected in a way.

The lyrics are not as openly Christian as EIR's past material but they present a completely fresh and different perspective on death and life. If you dig into the lyrics you can see Todd's Christian perspective on things shine through. On songs like On the Other Side, the lyrics deal with themes of judgment. How people who continually bath in sin will present themselves as unforgivable because they are unwilling to change. This seems to be the central theme of this five song disc. It's also worth noting that the production on this EP is the best that Todd has ever done, it really sounds top notch compared to all his past recordings. If you want to know the lyrics and or meanings of the songs on this CD you can contact Todd on our message board or you can go to his website at www.freewebs.com/edeninruins or if you're interested in his old band Transfigural Form you can email me and Ill hook you up with some stuff.

Reviewed by Dan.

Various Artists-U.S. White Metal Assault

Released-2005

Label-None

Style-Black Metal

This is a USA black metal compilation done by my good friend Doug Farrar. He took on the task to compile a nice 47 minute CD full of promising US blackmetal acts. What makes these bands special is that they do not stand for evil, but stand for the Lord in heaven. So on with the music review, we'll take it song by song.

The CD starts off with Funeral Oath and Resurrection by Sorrowstorm. This song is very brutal and fast but in the middle adds a big dose of melody. The vocals are all done in blackish screams with the occasional death growl. The drumming on this song is very intense and brutal.

Next comes Dethrone the False Lords by Goaticide. This song is done in old school black metal style. The production has a lot of high end with no low end at all giving it that raw and grim sound. The guitars are pretty mid paced through this one. The vocals are done as high pitched growls and the drumming just pounds and pounds at you. Like a lot of songs in this genre the riffs are actually kind of catchy when you really think about it.

Up next is Resist (Frontline Bloodbath) by Bucephalus. This is another old school black metal track. The production is a lot clearer than most black metal but the song still retains that grim sound. The drumming is pounding and the guitars are ferocious and tear at your skin. The vocals are high pitched growls as usual. This track also features a bit of a catchy beat.

Wisdom of the Fools by Rising Hour is the next track on our quest. This song starts out with a nice melodic intro which then kicks into some more old school black metal. The production is pretty bad on this song but you can still hear the guitars and drums ok. The riffs are very fast and the drumming is insanely fast, I think they might be programmed but I'm not sure. The vocals are the cool part on this song. They are very distorted and are anguished growls. They are indeed very cool. There is a nice dose of melody injected into this song.

The fifth song is Get Thee Hence Satan by Dirge of Bays, who takes the cake for the worst production on the disc. They play very fast and piercing old school black metal. The vocals are like a high pitched shrieking hiss. They are hard to explain. The guitars rip at you at a million miles per hour. The drums are pretty simplistic, just tons of blast beats throughout the song, I can't even hear the bass drum.

Next is Negative by Simeon, the song starts off with a slow beat and a melodic intro with some clean singing. Then the black metal kicks in. The song is pretty melodic. The structure basically has a slow melodic piece and then a fast blasting part. The vocals on the song are excellent black metal shrieks with some death growls thrown in; there is also a lot of clean singing going on in the

background. The song has a few death metal moments too but mostly its just black metal. This is probably one of my favorite songs on this disc.

Final Assault by Cabalistic is next. This is yet another song full of grim black metal fury. The production is horrible in a grim black metal sort of way. I enjoy the fury of this song quite a bit. It does not let you have a moments rest as the ferocious guitars and drums rip and cut you into little pieces. The vocals are a normal black metal shriek but this is also a standout track on this CD.

Next comes Arch of Thorns with Sword of God. The production on this dark black metal song is very quiet. The vocals are high pitched growls but they are extremely easy to understand. The music is extremely fast and intense it does not like to let up. Also the melodic intro to this song is very well done.

Eulogium is next with their song Frigid Emptiness. This is yet another song of harsh and grim black metal. The guitars have a nice depressing tone to them. The drums just pound and pound and pound at you, I'm not sure how I feel about black metal drumming as a whole, but it gets the job done. The vocals are awesome high pitched growls. The song is about six minutes long and does not give you a break through the whole thing.

Next is Graveyard by Banshee. I must say that Banshee has improved in almost every way possible since his debut 2004 demo tape. First of all, you can actually hear the drums. The guitars are well placed into the mix, the vocals also have improved. They are mostly blackish shrieks and growls. The only thing I dislike about them is there are some parts where Algar just screams very emotionally, he screams well like a banshee. He does this a lot throughout the song, so either I'll just hate this song forever for I'll get used to it. Anyways the guitar work here is very good as is the drumming. I cannot wait to hear the new Banshee Demos when they are available.

The final song is a bonus track by Grave Defier called Demon Hacktitaner (live). This is a death/grind assault on your ears. There are a lot of speedy guitar riffs and deep death growls. This song was put on there by Doug to give everybody a preview of his upcoming death/grind compilation.

Overall this compilation shows a lot of promising up and coming unblack metal bands. The only complaint about the disc maybe is that a lot of the songs tend to drag together, this is not fault of the bands, it is simply the style of music being played is a little too similar to each song. If you look at it a different way though, it sounds a lot like a multi talented black metal band's full length album. The CD does flow very well if you are in the mood for BM. I got my copy for free at www.shaveraudioandvideo.com but I've received word that they are out of stock of them. So hopefully Doug will make a few more. Definitely keep an eye out for Doug's next big compilation CD.

Reviewed by Dan.

Cybergrind-Transcend

Released-2000

Label-Rowe Productions

Style-Thrash/Death

I'm reviewing this album but I am just not sure how I feel about it. Cybergrind features ex members of Mortification Mike Forseburg and Michael Charslie. This CD was yet another CD I picked up for nearly nothing at Cornerstone. I must say I have many mixed feelings about it.

The CD starts off with three intros which I thought was more than a little too much. They could have at least combined them all into one large intro on one track. Anyways the guitar playing is very death metal influenced with lots of chugging, yet there are more than a few melodic moments on the CD. There are some parts where the riffs change from death to thrash, sometimes. Musically there isn't really anything wrong with the disc. The songs are well played with plenty of skill and precision. They just don't really stand out or stick in your mind, sometimes it's hard to decipher between songs at all. My biggest gripe is the vocals. I very strongly dislike pitch shifted vocals, the only time I think they are acceptable is in a gore grind type situation. I also suppose this bothered me too because I expected a band called Cybergrind to play some kind of grindcore. The vocals also though are not pitch shifted to make his vocals death metal at all. They are simply just grunts and barks. I don't mind these types of vocals but why on earth would you have to pitch shift vocals to make them sound like that? I'll get off the negative though for awhile. There are some good songs on this CD such as Nauseating Sickness, Cybergrind, and Destiny. There are a lot of strange little interludes in the CD such as Phantasmic Landscapes, E'no, and of course the three intros and the two outros. There is also one very goofy song called Rubber Chicken Refection which is a fast little grinding song.

Lyrically they are not as outspokenly Christian as I thought they would be. There are a few Christian songs, but songs like Cybergrind seem to just be about the music itself. I am not bashing the band in any way; the lyrics just weren't quite what I was expecting. The song Rubber Chicken Refection is hilarious though. The lyrics talk about the guys in the band getting so hungry that they ended up eating a rubber chicken. Overall this CD just doesn't do anything for me. I'll pop it in every now and then as background noise. I just enjoy my death metal or thrash metal to be in a bit more serious vein. Not that Cybergrind is bad; they just don't really give me much reason to come back. Although they are reformed now and are about to release another full length album sometime next year. Hopefully I will enjoy the new a bit more.

Reviewed by Dan.

Still Breathing-September

Released-2002

Label-Solid State

Style-Metalcore

You may know Still Breathing as that metalcore band that was on Solid State a few years ago that had a chick vocalist. That is pretty much what everybody thought about this band, which is why it was so passed up in the stores. This type of ignorance let me find this album at this years Cornerstone for five dollars. The band broke up shortly after the release of this album and nobody has heard from them again.

Musically this album sound nothing like the music we hear on the radio and see on MTV's Headbangers Ball that people called metalcore. This is true metalcore, love it or hate it. Most metalcore bands have a tendency to sound like a European metal band that plays American breakdowns. This is totally no the case. This album is American to the core. The guitar riffs are brutal and chunky and focus more on being heavy and chaotic than happy and bouncy, with the exception of the melodic intros that will probably creep you out more than make feel happy. The drumming on this CD is very superb and stays interesting throughout the CD. The double kick factor is out of this world, it is super fast. The bass lines take a chunk out of you. Our lovely female vocalist Dacey could rival just about any male hardcore vocalist in the scene. She screams high pitched with some lower growls thrown in. Her voice is great though because she still sounds like a woman and is not simply trying to imitate the other male vocalists of her time. The vocals contain a huge dose of passion; the words are not simply screamed but are felt entirely. She also adds some singing on the songs With Hateful Pride and One Kiss, she is not the best singer on earth, but her voice sounds nice along with the insane metalcore madness going on in the background. The song structures are very chaotic, but always bring themselves back together before the close of the song. There is a very good cover of Threatened by Living Sacrifice. I actually think this cover does the original quite a bit of justice.

Lyrically Still Breathing still holds onto the roots of spirit filled hardcore. Nearly every song is praise song to Christ. Some songs deal with social issues such as the song With Hateful Pride. The song One Kiss talks about Christ's journey to earth and his crucifixion. This song is a very emotional song but still maintains a very extreme environment. A lot of people will still pass this album up but I would encourage you to look past the hype and the "fashionable to hate" mindsets, and give this album a chance based on what it is, a very heavy metalcore album with very passionate lyrics and a very passionate vocal performance. Reviewed by Dan.

Aleitheian-Dying Vine

Released-2005

Label-Hope Prevails Productions

Style-Death Metal

Aleitheian deserves no introduction. For two years now this band has spellbound all those who have been lucky enough to see their amazing live show at Cornerstone in Bushnell Ill. As soon as Mike and I got to the fest and got our camp set up we saw the boys from Aleitheian walking around near the merch tents and asked them when they were playing. Luck shined in our favor because they would be playing that very night at five o'clock. Once again we were spellbound and I decided to pick up a copy of Dying Vine, their third and in my opinion best album yet.

Aleitheian is a band for musicians straight up. The average music fan would enjoy their albums fine, but for a musician this is an absolute disc of joy. Aleitheian plays melodic progressive technical death metal. Guess what, it's also heavy to add the cherry on the dessert. The guitars are in a strange tuning that I have yet to identify; I suppose it's just their own special tuning. They go from melodic and thrashy to deep death, to soft and almost acoustic sounding seamlessly. These boys never play the same riff twice this album is so technical that it will make your head hurt if you try and figure it all out on the first listen. There are some occasional solos that are so well placed your heart will overflow with joy. Be prepared to spin this disc a few times before you comment on it. The drumming is all over the place and is every bit as technical as the guitars. If there is a bass being played on this recording, it's drowned out pretty well since there is no bass player playing with the band live. The vocals are a great combination of high pitched growling and deep death grunts. There is a bit of melodic singing dispersed through the album. The singing is very well done and could rival the any power metal vocalist on the planet. All of these elements together create one of the greatest metal experiences ever. Aleitheian is a band whose goal is to amaze you every time you hear them, and so far they have achieved this goal with me. It is also worth noting that the production on this indie recording is top notch and is loud and clear, great for blasting in the car.

Lyricaly Aleitheian is every bit as technical and deep as their music. The lyrics will make little to no sense the first time you read them if you are not thinking about them. After a great deal of thought you will come to realize that they are some of the most intelligent and worshipful lyrics of any Christian metal band. The lyrics range from topics of worship, to hatred between brothers, and to Christ's sacrifice. This album can be ordered and is still available at the bands website at www.aleitheian.com. The other two releases are available to purchase on their website. This disc is definitely worth your time and money.

Reviewed by Dan.

Fewleftstanding-Wormwood

Released-2001

Label-Solid State

Style-Hardcore/Metalcore

This is yet another extremely cheap album that I purchased at the merch tents at Cornerstone this year. For awhile I had fallen away from hardcore and metalcore since it has been mostly polluted with emo and screamo bands that play breakdowns and constantly refer to themselves as “metal”. Yet Fewleftstanding was one of those bands who were from the golden age of metalcore and hardcore. Right as the bands had started to achieve an ultra heavy sound yet still be filled with the Holy Spirit. Fewleftstanding’s name is ironic since after that many bands from this genre had watered down their message and were too concerned with fitting in with the scene instead of standing up for Christ. So they truly were one of the few left standing up for Christ.

Musically Wormwood has mostly hardcore elements yet also has a few metal elements, but does not really fit into the genre that most call metalcore. The guitars are fast and have a heavy crunch to them but they are played so beautifully with a huge dose of melody. The guitars have some nice dynamics to them; they even feature some dissonance that would later become the Solid State trademark sound. The bass provides a nice rumble in the background to give us that nice low end sound, but is also very prevalent in some of the more bluesy songs. The drumming isn’t all that spectacular but is there where it counts with some nice double bass fills. The vocals are very well done, they are definitely a hardcore scream, but there is the ever so slight hint of a growl in them. The end result is a great hard hitting voice that is extremely easy to understand. I appreciate the vocalists’ efforts to be understood by pronouncing his words correctly. The overall effect is much more satisfying than one might think. On a two of the songs there is some great melodic singing going on. The albums closer Wormwood is a slower heartfelt rock song with all clean sung vocals. His singing voice is very good for a hardcore vocalist. I’ve heard many metalheads comment that this album is in fact decent even for those who are not so into hardcore. There are even some sweet jazzy parts.

Lyrically Fewleftstanding is completely and utterly sold out to Christ. No songs about girls or breakups here folks. Every song is about Christ and was made to be a witnessing tool. With lyrics like

“If I live I live for HIM, if I die, I die for HIM”

Fewleftstanding fit in well with the other spirit filled hardcore bands of their time. This album can be found on Amazon.com for a very reasonable price. With the ever growing number of hardcore fans in the world nowadays, this disc could definitely be a great witnessing tool. Even if you’re not into hardcore, remember that it could still be a great witnessing tool.

Reviewed by Dan.

Ultimatum-Puppet of Destruction

Released-1998

Label-Rowe Productions

Style-Thrash/Speed Metal

In a previous review for Ultimatum I said that this album is a boring one. I was basing that on an old burned copy of it that I had a few years ago, that I only listened to once or twice and then threw away. At that time in my life I was not very into the metal scene. I saw this disc at Cornerstone for five dollars and decided I'd give it another shot. First of all, I had never seen the cover art for this disc and I must say now that I do love it. It features a skeleton in a court jesters' outfit suspended by puppeteer's strings. I mean how metal is that?

Anyways, I popped in the disc and I must now say that I was full of it when I said that this disc was boring. From start to finish the sweet riffing is all I could think about. The guitars are fast and thrashy sounding. The songs are fast and have some nice melodic moments to them. They move between some nice speedy thrashy verses and then into some memorable hooks and then compliment it all off with some great solos. I wouldn't be so fast to say this is a straight up thrash disc since it has many classic and speed metal influences. The crunchy sound of the guitars gives the album a modern feel though. Some of my favorite riffs can be found on the songs Never, Scorn, Gutterbox, and Crosshope. The bass playing is very good on this disc. What makes this different than a lot of metal albums, the bass player is just as loud as the guitarists, this way it is used as an actual musical instrument instead of just a low end effect. The drumming is complete with a lot of double bass and some nice drum fills; there isn't a whole lot of innovation to be found in speed/thrash drumming. The vocals of Scott Waters are of the love em or hate em variety. Personally I think they sound great along with the music though some would disagree. Scott's vocals can only be described as frog like. They are very high pitched but not very raspy. If you ever wanted to hear what the color green my sound like give Ultimatum a listen. His vocals are very easy to understand though and his high pitched vocals are able to cross the genres of thrash, speed, and classic metal. Occasionally he will do a deep shout to add some variety.

Lyrically Ultimatum is band on a mission. What is that mission? You might ask. Well that mission is to give you an Ultimatum! For you to wake up and see the decaying world around you and realize that this society is falling apart and that only a nation that obeys Christ will be able to stand. They attack many things such as the filth of television and the dangers of selling out. This is very evident in songs such as Gutterbox and Never. In my opinion this album should be considered a classic in the world of Christian metal heads, since it features great music and a message that should apply to anybody Christian or not.

Reviewed by Dan.

Transfigural Form-Blood EP

Released-2005

Label-None

Style-Death/Thrash

Todd Pope is a man who is very hard to predict. I first was exposed to his band Transfigural Form when I read a review for his debut CD State of Decay on The Whipping Post website. I then contacted Todd to obtain the album which he told me he would send. He did send me a CD, but not only did he send me the CD but I also received both of his albums State of Decay and Refusal along with all of his unreleased material on an MP3 format CD. He then informed me that Transfigural Form was no longer a band and that he had cancelled the project. He told me of his new band Eden in Ruins who had just recorded an EP called the Unknown which I have reviewed earlier in this issue. A few weeks ago he just got a weird itch and decided to resurrect Transfigural Form and recorded a six song EP called Blood. Not only that, but he made it available for anybody to download for free from www.soundclick.com/transfiguralform.

Musically this is a return to the TF that I have come to know and love. This twenty four minute EP starts out with a keyboard intro that breaks into a nice metal song with some guitar leads in the background. From that point on all you hear is the old school death/thrash of Transfigural Form all over again. Todd had recently begun doing clean singing for Eden in Ruins, but he does not use them here. All my fears were relieved when I heard a familiar voice growl "the word of the Lord is a two edged sword". Guitar wise this EP is totally thrash metal to the bone. They have a crunchy chug chug to them to keep up the pace. The drumming sounds programmed, but I cannot confirm this, like I've said many times before, thrash drumming is not and is not supposed to be all that technical. The keyboards are very well placed and are not over used but they simply provide a nice atmosphere. The vocals are deep death growls which Todd claims are not as good as they used to be, but I personally think they sound pretty close to the originals he used a few years ago. Overall this is yet another quality release. The music is fast and catchy with some killer leads, solos, and riffs.

Lyrically Todd has stayed very much in the same vein as the older Transfigural Form material. The songs stress you to look into your own life and then match your lifestyles against the word of God. The songs are very Christ praising and are not nearly as cryptic as those found on the Eden in Ruins release. Not that the lyrics to EIR were bad. Todd is simply exercising two different lyrical approaches with his different projects. Once again, this album is FREE to download, so feel FREE to download it anytime. You can also download the cover artwork at www.freewebs.com/transfiguralform or www.freewebs.com/edeninruins. Todd can be contacted on our message boards at any time.

Reviewed by Dan.

Horde-Hellig Usvart (10th Anniversary Edition)

Released-2004

Label-Rowe Productions

Style-Black Metal

Ah Horde, probably the most talked about project in Christian metal. Even now eleven years later people are still going crazy about Horde. This album caused quite a stir when it was released in 1994 on Nuclear Blast Records. Most folks did not like the concept of Christian Black Metal or Unblack metal. This was probably the first thing that Christians and Non Christians agreed on. Anyways, the Christian metal heads were eating this up while everyone else was complaining. Horde was a one man project headed by Jayson Sherlock of Mortification fame. Although at the time nobody knew who was behind this project since the only name given in the CD credits is Anonymous, definitely a take off of Euronymous.

So anyways, in case you aren't aware, Horde played very grim and harsh black metal. The production value was definitely bad, some would even say that it is completely unlistenable, yet I must say I have heard A LOT worse in my experience. The guitar playing is very simplistic, the point was to be fast and "scary" instead of being overly complex or even musical for that matter. Some of the songs do slow down, but not for long. Whatever you do, don't let your guard down for a second. This album is absolutely lethal. The drumming is, well let's just say it, ridiculous. I have never heard drums this fast before that were not programmed. Yet if there is one man on earth that can play so fast it is definitely Mr. Sherlock. There is a bass on this album, but which gives it some low end but not a lot. They bass only mimics the guitar in every way so there's not much to talk about. There are actually some keyboards on this album that are used sparingly and add quite a creepy and dark atmosphere to the experience. Overall this is extremely harsh music. If you have never heard black metal before this would definitely be the place to start. If you are a fan of atmospheric or overly melodic metal, I would definitely steer clear of this.

Probably the most controversial part of this album, the lyrics are simply open war against Satanism. The name of the album translates as "Holy Unblack." The album includes songs called Inverted the Inverted Cross, Weak Feeble Dying Antichrist, Blasphemous Abomination of the Satanic Pentagram, and The Day of Total Armageddon Holocaust. The lyrics are very much in the same vein as these song titled. Some songs talk about dying and going to heaven and some talk about forgiveness found in Christ, but mostly its just straight up killing evil. This album is a total classic hands down. It is still available at www.blastbeats.com or www.soundmass.com.

-Reviewed by Dan.

Underoath-Cries of the Past

Released-2000

Label-Takehold Records

Style-Death Metal/Metalcore

Anybody remember Underoath before they were on Warped Tour and on every radio station in America? Remember when there was little to no singing on their albums at all? Remember when they had that awesome growling vocalist? Remember when they played metal? Well kids sadly enough those days are over. But there are a select few who will find this album that I am reviewing and will get to understand what made Underoath such a big deal in the first place.

This album is five songs long. That's right I said this ALBUM is five songs long. This is not an EP. You see, this five song album is roughly forty three minutes long. That means that these songs are incredibly long. Sound boring? I don't think so. The guitar playing on this album is probably the best out of all their albums. They play some very heavy crunchy riffs but they are extremely melodic. The riffs also change frequently, they never play the same riff twice in a song, it's almost like a two or three songs mixed into one if you want to think of it that way. The riffs are all metal riffs; even the most die hard metal purists cannot argue this. There are some great guitar leads here too, but no solos are to be found. The drumming is very metal too with gobs of blast beats and double bass. The pace of the songs are kept up well, they only slow down for the occasional melodic interlude before they come back to pound you into pieces. The drumming is exceptionally great on this disc. Also this is the first album to feature Underoath's trademark keyboards. The keys are loud and are not just there to create atmosphere they are an essential part of the music which gives it a melodic edge that most bands are still trying to master. The keyboards are usually the reason that this album is always mislabeled as Black Metal. The vocals are very passionate. They consist of mostly high pitched shrieks, but also contain a few deep death metal growls. This was Underoath's first vocalist Dallas Taylor, he will certainly be missed. His departure from the band ended the Underoath that the metalheads loved.

Lyricaly this album talks more about depression than their first album which was called Act of Depression. The album focuses around the pain of the vocalist who fell asleep at the wheel of his car and ended up killing his girlfriend in the crash. Even though this album is depressing it focuses on Christ's healing of the soul and in the end His power to mend our deepest wounds. If you want to find this album GOOD LUCK, it is extremely rare. I would hope and pray that this album gets re released sometime in the future. If you see it somewhere DO NOT HESITATE TO BUY IT. You will not be disappointed.

Reviewed by Dan.

Extol-The Blueprint Dives

Released-2005

Label-Century Media

Style-Progressive Rock

Wow, this was not what I was expecting to hear from Extol. Yet I really should not have been as surprised as I was. You see none of Extols albums have been what we've been expecting. Burial is easy because it was a debut album so nobody knew what to expect. Then we saw Undeceived sweep us off our feet with its huge doses of brutality and melody that has yet to be matched. Then on Synergy we saw Extol ditch the death/black metal altogether and go in an uber technical thrash metal direction. Now we see The Blueprint Dives go in a completely different direction from all the previous albums. One thing I have noticed though is that the newest album does tend to borrow a few elements from the previous.

Musically Extol has gone in a progressive rock direction but still has some very metal moments in it. The guitar work is very different than on previous albums simply because it is being handled by two new guitar players. Yet they still retain that "Extol" sound. Songs such as Soul Deprived feature some very heavy moments that may remind you of the sound found on Synergy, while songs like Gloriana and Pearl create a sound utterly alien to the average Extol fan. The drumming is still good, but of course is dubbed down to match the sometimes laid back and subtle sound of this album. The vocals are very different than past albums. Some people would say that the vocalist could not possibly be the same. Well the truth is though that it is still in fact the same. This album features the most clean singing ever found on an Extol album. Yet the singing is very well done and easy to understand. Many people refer to it as "emo" singing, but they are simply wrong seeing that the vocals are not nasally or even whiney. The screaming that was found on the Synergy album is back in full force on this CD and is about 50/50 with the singing. Sorry folks there are not death or black metal vocals to be found on this CD. Overall this album is very much a musical journey in itself. From the heavy epic pieces to the slower more subtle sounds. The Blueprint Dives is a very rewarding audio experience.

The only thing about Extol that has not ever changed is the strong lyrics. After four albums Extol is still very much in it for Christ. Not all songs focus on Christian topics, but most of them do. Some of the songs could even be considered praise songs just by the lyrics alone. A lot of people already hate this album, but I would encourage you to check it out for yourself before you make a decision. I feel that this is something that is up to you personally and your own musical tastes. Yet my personal taste says that this album is every bit as good as the three previous albums. You can buy this album almost anywhere, but you can check out www.solidstaterecords.com or www.centurymedia.com.

Reviewed by Dan.

Antestor-Martyrium

Released-2000

Label-Endtime Productions

Style-Black/Doom Metal

Antestor is yet another pioneer band in the Christian extreme metal scene. They were certainly one of the first bands from Norway in the early nineties that had enough guts to proclaim their Christian faith through the same music that their enemies used. Martyrium was released back in 1994 but it never saw an official release until six years later in 2000, when it was released on Endtime productions. My version is a sweet digipack version with green artwork and a lyric sheet.

One thing I love about Antestor is their ability to take any musical style and do their own thing with it, and no matter what style they pick, it ends up being sorrow metal in the end. On Martyrium, Antestor has mixed doom metal and black metal together seamlessly to create a masterpiece. The guitars have a very heavy distortion and they are actually able to sound depressing. I'm not sure how they've managed to do this, but they have in fact done it. They go at a slower pace on these songs. I would say the guitars are even doomier on this release than on their first demo The Defeat of Satan. The black metal influences also add to the overall gloom and doom of the record, I know it's hard to explain but bear with me. The drumming is fast and blasting in occasional places. The keyboards are always present in the background and they sound great the synth is very dark and haunting. Sometimes the sound is a traditional organ like synth, but for some songs such as Depressed, it is used as a piano. There is a slight folky sound on a few songs. The vocals are a constant trade off of deep death metal growls and anguished high pitched shrieks. The vocal trade off is nicely done though, it almost sounds like the vocalist is arguing with himself as well. There are also some clean male vocals on a few tracks; they are even operatic in some places. There is also some clean and scary whispering on some songs. This album is perfect to listen to on colder nights with the lights out.

The lyrics are extremely praiseful to Christ. They put a strong emphasis on the weakness of mankind's spirit, and the everlasting strength that Jesus provides for us. The lyrics speak of the Lords judgment against sinners and the reasons for Christ's crucifixion. What I love about these lyrics is the overall honesty of them. They are not afraid to admit that they are unworthy of Christ's gift of salvation. In some songs they cry out to God because they are scared or lonely. All of these things we must remember to cry out to God for and not to rely on ourselves. This album definitely deals with topics that people can relate to. It makes for a great witnessing tool. I got this CD at the Endtime Productions table at Cornerstone this year. You can probably still buy it at www.endtimeproductions.com .
Reviewed by Dan.

Crimson Thorn-Unearthed for Dissection

Released-2005

Label-None

Style-Death Metal

I went and saw Crimson Thorn play an amazing live set at Cornerstone this year. I was also happy to see that they had re released their albums Dissection and Uneearthed. I know these albums have been re released before, but they featured only improvements in the artwork. This new double disc set features both albums digitally re mastered at Cleft in the Rock Studios. Let me tell you this, these albums sound great. Everything on Uneearthed and Dissection is turned up and everything is clear to the ears. For the first time ever you will hear the death metal madness of Crimson Thorn through the speakers in your car and boy will they be loud.

We all remember Uneearthed as Crimson Thorn's debut album into the Christian metal world. This album simply rocks! The thundering guitars and heavy vocals and drums will pound you into submission for nearly an hour, with no chance for a break. The songs are heavy and straightforward. Don't expect an ultra technical feast here or anything. Crimson Thorn is just very concerned with being heavy and brutal. There are only two melodic parts to the whole CD, so don't be surprised at the unrelenting brutality of this disc. The new production on this album really helps it in my opinion. When I listened to this in comparison to my old Morphine Records copy, it was like a whole new experience. The guitar work is able to shine even brighter now that you can hear the guitar clearly. The first disc contains the Uneearthed album and a few tracks off of the Plagued demo. These songs are more thrashy and not nearly as up to quality as the Uneearthed songs. The lyrics are all totally about Christ. They talk about the dangers of false prophets, false teachers, and they stress the strength of Christ above all else.

Disc two features a re mastered version of the Uneearthed albums and the rest of the songs from Plagued. Dissection takes up where Uneearthed left off. The guitars are louder on this album, and the vocals have a bit more variation to them. The riffs are just as heavy as ever but are a bit more memorable and catchy than on Uneearthed. The drumming is very good, but they do not seem as loud and clear as on the first disc. Overall though Dissection has a strong Christian message that focuses a bit more on Christ's love more than the destruction of demons. The lyrics also stress turning to Christ with your problems.

Some people would question why these albums should be re released, but they must realize that the originals are extremely hard to find and simply sound muddy and mixed up. I would say this re release is a great opportunity to introduce metal heads to one of Christian metal's most respected and classic bands. Play it loud!

Reviewed by Dan.

Inevitable End-Demo

Released-2004

Label-None

Style-Death/Thrash Metal

Inevitable End is a band from Norway who plays some very fast paced thrash metal. The band has released their three song demo on their website at www.inevitable-end.com . I don't know a whole lot about this band, despite them being on June's band spotlight. I do know that they rock hard and have delivered us a fine three song demo to eat up.

The CD starts off with the song Redeemed by fire. The first thing you'll notice is the raw production value. To me this adds very strongly to the underground thrash sound that is conveyed. The song starts off with a high pitched growl accompanied by some very fast thrash metal guitars and drums. The song is very fast paced and the vocals are all growled. The lyrics focus on relying on Christ instead of ourselves. Towards the middle of the song it becomes kind of melodic and slows down for a bit before it speeds up again ends the onslaught off. That song leads us into the song End of All Battles which is my personal favorite on the disc(I loved it so much that I played it on this weeks radio show). This song is extremely fast and features an awesome duel vocal assault with some raspy vocals mixed with some ultra guttural death metal grunts. The double kick on this song is relentless and will pummel you to death if you're not careful ☺. The lyrics are very praiseful to Christ. Next comes the song Parade of Chaos, not to be confused with the Zao song of the same name. If you thought the other two songs were fast this one is even faster. The song starts out with a raspy guttural growl and then the speed fest begins! The guitar playing on this song is top notch while the growling continues. I could definitely see this band going in a death/grind direction in the future. The lyrics describe the setting of our current world.

Overall this is a great eleven minute demo CD to absorb. It was very nice of the fellows in Inevitable End to provide us with this demo absolutely free. I am very anxious to hear what this band has to offer in the future. Keep your eyes open for a release in the future and remember to continue to pray for bands in order to keep them running. The world needs more death/thrash bands, and thanks to bands such as Grave Forsaken, Transfigural Form, Zombie Devourment, and Inevitable End, the world just may have itself a revival of Christian Thrash metal.

Reviewed by Dan.

I, the Gambler

By Tyler Koftan

The clack of dice, the smell of smoke, the roomful of dull chatter that fills the head; ice clinking in glasses, the jackpot woop-woop-wooping of the slot machines, and the blind fortune that makes you or breaks you--such was my life. I, the gambler, loved the casino, not just for the money or the fun, or even the women, but for the sinful atmosphere inside. But I liked the money too.

Money, indeed, was my friend that night. After a long winning streak, I had won enough money to feed several thousand people for a long time--yeah, right--but the adrenaline pumping through my veins told me to forget those poor people and follow the advice of the casino girls. Tourists, security guards, and high-rollers alike gathered around me like love struck admirers to their teen idol as I won game after game of dice, sweet dice. I swear to you, Lady Luck herself was there by my side, cheering me on as the dice fell to the table, followed by roars of delight from my fellow gamblers. Each raking of mounds of chips to my side of the table fueled the crowd's passion, and in turn my ego.

"Another seven. Very impressive," the dealer mused. "Another seven and you'll be up to a quarter million."

I actually lit a cigar proudly, taking credit for my luck.

"A quarter million? Is that all?" I handed my cigar absentmindedly to someone else. "I bet I can do better than that."

"We'll see, I suppose." The dealer smiled politely, but his eyes were telling me a different story. Was he envying me, or pitying me? "What'll it be, sir?"

The crowd around me immediately became silent. All I could hear was the spinning of slots and distant conversation. The crowd was bent on my next word. What else could I do?

"Let's put it all on seven," I said. All of my admirers immediately cheered and whistled their approval as the dice were passed to me. They began to chant my name as I accepted them and, after a moment of prayer, tossed them away.

Totally numb, my future riding on those two cubes, I waited for that seven, for that roar of approval from the crowd to which I had become addicted. Ten years passed in approximately two and a half seconds.

"Eight," the dealer announced. He smiled venomously as he raked all my beautiful blue, white, red, and purple chips to his side.

"Eight," I whispered breathlessly. The crowd, overwhelmed by pity but unsure of what to do, hovered silently. Then, as their compassion slowly turned to apathy, one by one they went back to their tables, eager for the next thrill. Alone except for the dealer, I emptily broke down into tears.

Lady Luck is a fickle mistress.

I, the gambler, was a wreck. Sobbing at a sinner's table at which I was no longer welcome, in the presence of people who would rather pretend I did not exist, in a casino which has finally taken what it wanted all along and would like me to please leave now, I had no choice but to take my pity party outside into the parking lot, where my life came to an end.

I stepped out into an intersection a little too early and got run down by a truck. I do not recall if it hurt or not, but what followed certainly did.

Immediately I was pulled up, up, up, as if by strings. I felt lighter and lighter, flew faster and faster until I reached the highest point of everything. I was so high up; I should have been afraid, but I just felt elated. I was in a realm of warmth; I was warmth.

"Ah," I sighed. "What was I so concerned about?"

Then I collapsed inside. The most intense guilt I had ever known pushed on me from all sides like a pack of predators on a single prey. I wailed for myself, I wailed for whomever I hurt that did not deserve it and then gave in. I fell.

I fell. I fell. I fell. I fell until I forgot what not falling was like. Then I merged with disgusting bloody ground. I hit it and kept going until I had reached the center. Inside was every nightmare I had ever experienced: the terror of being kidnapped, the hopelessness of drowning, the shame of classroom humiliation, and the pain of the entire world falling on me, eating into me like acid.

"NOW ARE YOU SORRY," a booming voice pounded, "NOW ARE YOU SUFFERING."

I wanted so badly to say, "Come back, save me, oh please help me--" but my mouth was desperate to remain shut against the juice.

"HOW I WANTED TO HOLD YOU CLOSE, BUT YOU WERE NOT WILLING. DARKNESS HAS CONSUMED YOU, MY CHILD, AND YOU ARE NO LONGER FIT FOR MY PRESENCE."

"Jee...zuss..." I moaned, teeth clenched.

"It's too late," whispered another.

The torments were getting stronger, and the voice farther away. How I longed to hear that voice again; it was everything I was looking for in the casino, in the brothel, in the bar, in the arcade. Knives set in to rend my skin.

"Oh how I longed hold you close..."

And that was the end, like a door of hope slamming shut forever. I will be alone for countless swipes of the knife, until the moon turns blood-red, until the stars fall into the sea, until fire consumes the earth.

The End.

Great Places to buy Christian Music

- 1. Rotting Records-Best Prices for underground metal CDs, Best shipping prices at \$1.50 per CD. Lots of rare stuff.
www.rottingrecords.tk**
- 2. Blastbeats-Good prices, used and new CDs, Biggest selection of CD's.
www.blastbeats.com**
- 3. Shaver Audio and Video-Lots of great DVDs and Videos, shipping included in prices.**
- 4. Radrockers-Huge selection of CD,but must have a minimum order of \$25**

More distros coming soon.

If you are not a Christian and you want to become one, here are some good facts to know.

1. Adam and Eve were the first humans created by God.
 - a. They could live with God forever because they were innocent.
 - b. Satan (the devil, Lucifer...etc) tricked Adam and Eve into breaking God's law.
2. Adam and Eve were condemned to death for their sin and cast out of the Garden of Eden to die.
 - a. Since they were sinful, their offspring were sinful.
 - b. We stemmed from Adam and Eve, so we are sinful.
3. God pitied our poor pathetic souls.
 - a. We were born sinful so we are doomed to die from birth.
 - b. In order to pay the debt for sinning, a life is required as payment.
4. God came down and walked as a man as Jesus.
 - a. Jesus was a man but He was also God
 - b. Jesus was not sinful from birth because He was God and did not stem from Adam and Eve.
5. Jesus died and paid the debt for humanity's sin
 - a. Jesus was able to pay the debt for humanity because He was not sinful.
 - b. Since Jesus was God, his death was sufficient payment for all the sins of humanity, past and present.
6. Three days after His death, God raised Jesus from the dead.

a. Jesus rose and explained that He was the judge on whether or not we went to Heaven or Hell when we died.

b. Jesus holds our salvation in His hands because He paid the debt for our sins.

7. Jesus explained that in order to get to Heaven when you die, you have to believe in Him and acknowledge what He did for you.

a. When you accept Him and believe in Him, you will receive His gift of salvation in the form of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit).

b. The Holy Ghost is God's/Jesus' spirit dwelling within you.

c. When you receive the Holy Ghost, you will be able to enter Heaven and live forever with God when you die.

8. Satan is jealous of God's majesty and is dedicated to destroying all that God creates and loves.

a. This means that Satan hates you (because God loves you). So he will do anything to keep you from getting the Holy Ghost.

b. Satan will do this by trying to make you believe ANYTHING but God's truth.

c. Satan will try and steal as many souls as he can from God, before God returns and destroys him.

9. Christ will return to Earth sometime in the future to destroy the world and take with Him all those who have the Holy Ghost, all the rest will be sent to Hell and live in eternal separation from God.

10. If you want to become a Christian and go to Heaven when you die, pray this prayer.

"Jesus, I ask You to forgive me for my sins and set me free from the powers of the Devil. I want You from this moment on to be Lord in my life and I want You to take away the burdens of my heart. Jesus I believe that You are God and that You died and rose from the dead as Your word (the Bible) says. I believe that You once and for all, totally defeated Death and the Devil. I ask that You receive me as Your child and to save me right now. Thank You Jesus. In Christ's name I pray Amen."

For more information, read the Bible (available at any public library or local church) and check into a local Bible Believing Church. God Bless you on your new life.
-Dan

And now, with ONLY the faintest hint of self Mockery...

MUFFINS

